



U.S. Department
of Transportation

America's Marine Transportation System

The U.S. Marine Transportation System, or MTS, consists of waterways, ports and their intermodal landside connections which allow the various modes of transportation to move people and goods to, from, and on the water.



- ◆ More than 95 percent of the overseas trade that comes in or out of the United States moves by ships.
- ◆ Ships and barges have the fewest accidental spills or collisions of all forms of transportation.
- ◆ 90 percent of all equipment and supplies for Desert Storm were shipped via our inland and coastal waterways from U.S. strategic ports.
- ◆ Virtually all waterborne cargoes, commercial and defense related, are intermodal in nature. The vitality of our intermodal connections is a significant national defense consideration.
- ◆ The United States fulfills its national security or global security missions through a safe and effective marine transportation system.
- ◆ U.S. ports and waterways handle more than 2 billion tons of both domestic and foreign commerce each year.
- ◆ By the year 2020, U.S. overseas trade is expected to more than double.
- ◆ Every State relies upon a national network of ports for its goods.
- ◆ Millions of Americans enjoy passenger vessels that provide sightseeing, excursion, dining, gaming, windjamming, whale watching, and nature cruises.
- ◆ In 1996, Americans spent \$18.1 billion on wildlife watching.
- ◆ Commercial and recreational fishing contribute more than \$111 billion to States' economies annually.
- ◆ In Alaska, ferries are the highways to and from businesses and homes. In many areas, ferries provide an environmentally sound alternative to cars.
- ◆ Investments in commercial transportation decrease the cost and environmental impact of meeting military transportation needs.
- ◆ About 78 million Americans participate in recreational boating, using 16 million boats of all types.

To learn more about America's marine transportation system, visit the U.S. Department of Transportation's MTS web site at <http://www.dot.gov/mts>.

You also may visit the Maritime Administration's web site at <http://www.marad.dot.gov>, or contact the agency by telephone at 1-800-99MARAD or email pao.marad@marad.dot.gov.